

REMARKS

Claims 1-16, 18, 19, 35 and 36 are pending. Claims 1, 35 and 36, the independent claims, have been amended. Claims 17 and 20-34 were previously canceled. Each of the issues raised in the Office Action area addressed below.

Claim Objections

The pending claims were rejected as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.75(d), for failing to conform to the invention as set forth in the specification, and that the terms and phrases used in the claims must find clear support and antecedent basis in the description. While not addressing the merits of the Action's position on this issue, Applicants have now amended the specification to include antecedent claim language to support the amended claims. This added language is not new matter, as clear support for the language added can be found in at least the drawings and the written description corresponding thereto.

Specifically, the claims and specification have been amended to include language regarding first and second dedicated passageways which are substantially parallel to the axis of the hub. This is clearly supported in the subject application by referencing Figs. 2, 3, 6 and 11, and the portions of the specification corresponding to these figures.

To that end, Applicants have provided an amendment to the specification to provide the antecedent support alleged missing in the Action. This objection is thus now considered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

§ 112, first paragraph Rejection

The pending claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, in that the Action alleges that the pending

claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventors at the time the application was filed had possession of the claimed invention. While not addressing the merits of the Action's position in this regard, Applicants have amended the claim to eliminate the claim language regarding axial alignment. Thus, this rejection is now considered moot and its withdrawal is respectfully requested.

§ 102 Prior Art Rejection

Claim 35 was rejected as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 3,503,326 (Juhasz et al.). Specifically, the Action indicated that since claim 35 recited only one dedicated passageway, the disclosure of Juhasz et al. anticipated the claim. Applicants have since amended claim 35 to conform substantially to the patentable features recited in the other independent claims, that is, the recitation of at least two dedicated passageways in the central hub which are substantially parallel to a central axis of the hub. Thus, claim 35 is now patentable and withdrawal of the §102 rejection of this claim is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the issues raised in the outstanding Office Action have all been addressed. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

No fee is currently due for the present response. However, in the event that it is determined that additional fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 50-0311, Ref. No. 18405-115, Customer No. 35437.

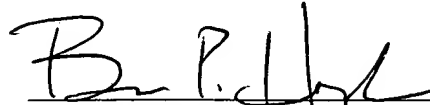
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Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 935-3000. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

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Respectfully submitted,



Brian P. Hopkins, Reg. No. 42,669
Attorney for Applicants
Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris
Glovsky & Popeo, P.C.
The Chrysler Center
666 Third Avenue, 24th Floor
New York, New York 10017
Tel: (212) 935-3000
Fax: (212) 983-3115